

Bring it On: The Gift of Conflict

Conflict Mode Self-assessment: Think about instances where you face a negotiation or disagreement with someone else. Select ONE STATEMENT in each pair of statements below that you identify with most closely.

For some questions, the choice will be clear. For others it may seem like both options (or neither!) fit you the best. Nevertheless, just pick the one that comes *closest to you, most of the time*.

It is important that you answer quickly and honestly; “go with your gut” to get the most insight out of this exercise.

Pick one of the statements in all 30 paired statements:

1. A. Sometimes I let the other person take responsibility for solving the problem.
 B. I prefer to focus on things that we agree about, rather than negotiate what we disagree about.

2. A. I try to find compromise solutions whenever I can.
 B. I attempt to deal with all the concerns that the other person has.

3. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
 B. I might try to soothe the other person’s feelings and preserve our relationship.

4. A. I try to find compromise solutions whenever I can.
 B. Sometimes I will sacrifice my own wishes for the wishes of the other person.

5. A. I consistently seek the other person’s help in working out solutions.
 B. I try to do whatever is necessary to avoid useless tensions with other people.

6. A. I try to avoid creating unpleasantness for myself.
 B. I try to make sure my position prevails.

7. A. I want to think things over before making decisions, so I postpone the issue sometimes.
 B. I give up some things in exchange for others.

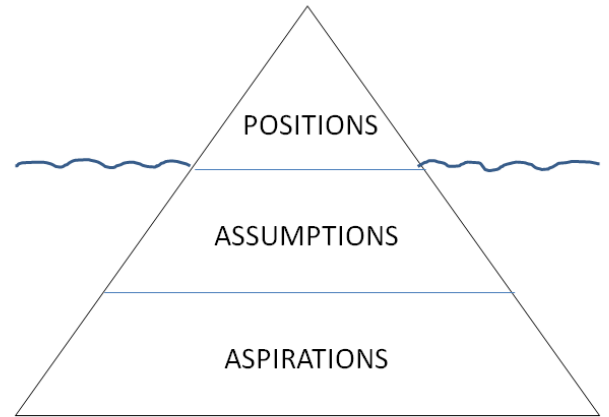
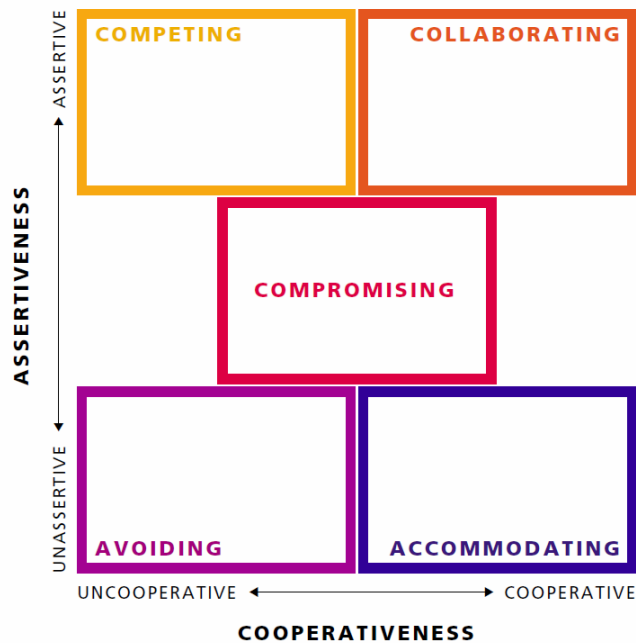
8. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
 B. I prefer to get all the issues and concerns on the table as quickly as possible.

9. **A.** I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about.
 B. I make some effort to get my way.
10. **A.** I push hard to get achieve my goals.
 B. I try to find compromise solutions.
11. **A.** I like getting all the concerns and issues out in the open as quickly as possible.
 B. Preserving a relationship is more important than winning.
12. **A.** Sometimes I avoid taking positions that I know will create controversy.
 B. I will let the other person get some of what they want if they will let me get some of what I want.
13. **A.** The middle ground is often the best choice.
 B. I work hard to get my points across.
14. **A.** I tell the other person my ideas and then listen to their ideas.
 B. I make sure the other person understands the logic and benefits of my solution.
15. **A.** Sometimes the relationship is the most important thing, so I'll try to soothe the other person's feelings.
 B. I do whatever is necessary to avoid useless tensions.
16. **A.** I make an effort not to hurt the other person's feelings.
 B. I work to persuade the other person to the benefits of my solution for both of us.
17. **A.** I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
 B. I make an effort to avoid useless tensions with other people.
18. **A.** If it makes other people happy, I might let them maintain their views.
 B. I will let other people have some of their positions if they let me have some of mine.
19. **A.** My goal is to get all the concerns and issues identified and out in the open as quickly as possible.
 B. I try to postpone the issue until I have had some time to think about it.
20. **A.** I like to work through all the differences immediately.
 B. My goal is to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both of us.

21. A. In negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person's wishes.
B. I prefer discussing problems directly.
22. A. I look for solutions that meet in the middle.
B. I urge my position and wishes.
23. A. I want all the issues and concerns satisfied, not just some of them.
B. Sometimes I let the other person take responsibility for solving the problem.
24. A. If the other person's position is really important to them, I would try to meet their needs.
B. I try to get the other person to settle for a compromise.
25. A. My goal is to demonstrate the logic and benefits of my position to the other person.
B. When negotiating, I am considerate of the other person's wishes.
26. A. I propose a middle ground.
B. Almost always, I want everyone's wishes completely satisfied.
27. A. Sometimes I avoid taking positions that would create controversy.
B. If it makes the other person happy, I might let them maintain their views.
28. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
B. I often seek out the other person's help in working out a solution.
29. A. I propose a middle ground.
B. I feel differences are not always worth worrying about.
30. A. I try not to hurt the other person's feelings.
B. I always share the problem with the other person so that we can work things out.

To process the assessment, circle your answer (A or B) for each question 1-30. At the bottom of the chart, add up the number of circled answers for each column 1 – 5.

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
1.				A	B
2.		B	A		
3.	A				B
4.			A		B
5.		A		B	
6.	B			A	
7.			B	A	
8.	A	B			
9.	B			A	
10.	A		B		
11.		A			B
12.			B	A	
13.	B		A		
14.	B	A			
15.				B	A
16.	B				A
17.	A			B	
18.			B		A
19.		A		B	
20.		A	B		
21.		B			A
22.	B		A		
23.		A		B	
24.			B		A
25.	A				B
26.		B	A		
27.				A	B
28.	A	B			
29.			A	B	
30.		B			A
TOTAL					



TAKE HOME POINTS:

1. Poor conflict management and compassion fatigue are intertwined; each is simultaneously disease and symptom. A downward spiral will develop if left untreated over the course of a career.
2. We must recognize the difference between problems and dilemmas. Problems can be solved, they are the difference between "what is, and what ought to be." Dilemmas are more complex. They require difficult choices where there is no clear "right" answer.
3. As messy and painful as conflict can be, neglecting it can be worse.
4. When faced with a conflict, pause to examine your position, assumptions, and aspirations prior to acting. Encourage the other party to do so as well. Taking 'the pause' will rarely disserve you.
5. Inaction is a choice. Failing to take action is not passive or harmless. We have a responsibility to ourselves and our profession to address conflict and not ignore it.

